less and abandoned when detected in crime, also points to the same conclusion. How quick, for instance, the descent of females, especially of ladies in the upper walks of society, and of the ministers of religion, when they have fallen into intemperance, impurity, or some similar vice, and been detected and exposed ! Others might fall into the same sins, and rise again ; but the persons now referred to feel as if a stain had been left on their character which human lustrations cannot wash out, and for which society provides no expiation; and concluding that they cannot be bettered, they are led without difficulty to abandon themselves to every besetting lust. The love of virtue, for virtue's sake, may be as powerful in this class as in others, who have extricated themselves from the toils which at one time surrounded them; and wherein then lies the difference ? The tendency of both is downward ; but as the one class is rolling on, it is caught, and at last restrained, by a thousand objects which Providence puts in the way, such as vanity, sense of character, and worldly success ; whereas, in regard to the other, such barriers being removed, their course becomes that of the stone loosened from the brow of the mountain, and descending with an ever accelerated speed.

It seems as if virtuous and religious principle were so weak, that the man of highest character might, if placed in other circumstances, have become the most vicious. No one can tell how much he owes of the character which he may have been able to sustain, to the restraints of providence, rather than to any high and holy internal principle.

Take either of the extremes of earthly rank, and you find human nature showing its native inclination. It is proverbial that the extremes of wickedness collect at the extremes of society. Place persons so high that they know that they cannot mount higher, for they are on the very pinnacle, and so protect

them that they feel that they are secured by their very position from falling, and the true dispositions of man's heart will be exhibited. Weaknesses and follies, which those who climb by the help of other men the heights of worldly aggrandizement would carefully curb or conceal, are unblushingly displayed, or perhaps even gloried in, by those who feel their independence; and vices which might have been kept down under a salutary fear of failure are allowed to spring up in rank luxuriance. Or